

TURNING 18 IN IDAHO: A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR TEENAGERS INTRODUCTORY LESSON

I. Objective

As a result of participating in this lesson, students will be able to:

- Discuss what it means to be an adult in the eyes of the law.
- Understand specific laws important for young people to know as they reach the age of majority.

II. Materials

- *Turning 18: A Survival Guide for Teenagers* (enough copies for each student to have his/her own)
- Flip chart or whiteboard
- Pen for flip chart or whiteboard
- Scenario cards (optional)

III. Procedure

Time

This lesson (without the added activity) is meant to take approximately 50 minutes. This time may vary slightly depending on the class. Approximate times for each section of the lesson are listed.

Introduction Activity (10 minutes)

- A. Explain: This year's Law Day theme is "The Rule of Law." Today we are going to discuss how the rule of law applies to you when you turn 18 and reach what is called the age of majority.
- B. Ask the students: What do you think it means to be an adult in the eyes of the law? What are some of the privileges of being an adult? What are some of the responsibilities of being an adult?
- C. Have the students provide answers to the questions. This can be done as either a discussion or you could write down their responses on a whiteboard or flip chart paper.
- D. Once the students have provided their list, go through and either further explain some of their points or fill in any missing points. Make sure most of the following key points are covered:
 - 18 is the age of majority for many laws, but not all. For instance, you can vote and serve jury duty when you are 18, but the drinking age is 21.
 - You are now responsible for your own actions, not your parents. For example, if you crash your car when you are 17, your parents can be held responsible for some of the damages. When you are 18 you are responsible if you are involved in an accident.
 - You have more privileges. You can enter into contracts, vote, or serve on a jury.

- You also have more responsibilities. You have to pay your own taxes, pay bills listed in your name, and sign up for selective service (if you are a male).
- You are no longer protected by juvenile courts. Situations that might have gotten you a lecture and a ride home in a police car at 17 could land you in jail at 18.

Main Activity (30 Minutes)

- A. Hand out the *Turning 18* magazine. **NOTE:** You might want to give them a minute or two to thumb through the magazine or you might have difficulty keeping their attention as they thumb through it during the lesson explanation.
- B. Explain that you are going to assign a student or groups of students to be responsible for different sections of the booklet. Their job is to become experts on their assigned section and then report back to the rest of the class on their section.
- C. Depending on the class size, assign a section to each student, pair of students or small group of students. **NOTE:** Ask the teachers' assistance in grouping students. She/he will know the pairings that will work best in the class. Again depending on your class size, it may not be feasible to cover all topics. If not, pick and choose from the available sections. Sections include:

- Getting around (page 2 and 3)
- Moving out (page 3 and 4)
- Having fun (page 4 and 5)
- Alcohol and drugs (page 5 and table on page 6)
- Money matters (page 6 and 7)
- Working and taxes (page 7)
- Sex and the law (page 8)
- Doing your part (page 8 to 10)
- Marriage and partnership (page 10 and 11)
- Dealing with domestic violence (page 11)
- Crimes and consequences (page 11 and 12)
- Guns and weapons (page 12 and 13)
- Hate crimes (page 13)
- Civil law and lawsuits (page 13)
- Surfing the Internet (page 14)
- Protecting your identity (page 14 and 15)
- Consumer protection (page 15)

- D. On students are in smaller groupings, they must read their assigned section and answer these questions:

1. What are three to five key points in your section?
2. What's the most important point to remember?
3. What did you learn that you didn't know before?
4. What is something you don't agree with or you think is unfair and why?

- E. Once students have had time to review their section and answer the questions in their small groups, have them present their findings to the class as a whole. **NOTE:** It might be useful to give the students a time limit of no more than one or two minutes for each of their presentations.

Wrap Up Activity (10 Minutes)

Once you have finished the activity, you might open the floor for any questions the students have about how the law will impact them as they turn 18. They may have specific questions about their own interactions or the interactions of their friends with the legal system. **NOTE:** To help make this section more meaningful, you may have the teacher work with the students in advance to prepare any questions they might have.

Extended Activity: You Be the Lawyer (15 Minutes)

If you have more time after the main activity, this additional activity can serve as another option to fill the class time.

- A. Give the students the scenarios on the next page. You can give them one or both of the scenarios.
- B. Have the students read the scenarios
- C. Ask: What laws were broken? What are the possible consequences? If the person in the scenario could rewind, what could she/he do differently?

III. Scenario Cards

The cards included here can be used to stimulate discussion for the *You Be the Lawyer* activity. You can also make up your own scenarios based on other sections of the *Turning 18* magazine.

Kate is driving to work and another driver cuts in front of her in traffic. Kate has to swerve to miss the other driver, which makes her angry. She speeds up to catch the driver and almost hits someone who is crossing the street. A police officer witnesses Kate's activities and pulls her over. When she approaches the car, the officer notices an empty beer bottle in the back seat. The officer asks Kate to step out of the car so she can administer a DUI test. Since Kate hasn't been drinking, she refuses to take the test.

It's a Friday night, one week before Joe's 18th birthday. His parents have given him an early birthday present of a brand new hunting rifle. Joe and his best friend Henry (who will still be 17 for another two months) decide they want to go out early Saturday morning to try out the new rifle. So, they pack the car with their supplies for the hunting trip, including the new rifle, and then go over to a friend's house to play Xbox. Joe is excited about his new gun, so he brings it into the house to show his friend. He jokingly points the gun at his friend who gets angry and tells Joe and Henry to leave. As they leave, Joe trips and the gun goes off. It doesn't hurt anyone, but a bullet lodges in the living room wall.